Sri Sri Siksastaka

Sri Sanmodana Bhasyam by Srila Bhakti Vinoda Thakur

With Commentary By Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakura

Sloka 1

ceto-darpana-marjanam bhava-mahadavagni-nivapanam

sreyah-kairava-candrika-vitaranam vidya-vadhu-jivanam

anandabhudhi-vardhanam prati-padam purnamrtasvadanam

sarvatma-snapanam param vijayate sri-krsna-sankirtanam

cetah - of the heart; darpana - the mirror; marjanam - cleansing; bhava - of material existence; maha-davagni - the blazing forest fire; nivapanam - extinguishing; sreyah - of good fortune; kairava - the white lotus; candrika - the moonshine; vitaranam - spreading; vidya - of all education; vadhu - wife; jivanam - the life; ananda - bliss; ambudhi - the ocean; vardhanam - increasing; prati-padam - at every step; purna-amrta - of the full nectar; asvadanam - giving taste; sarva - for everyone; atma-snapanam - bathing of the self; param - transcendental; vijayate - let there be victory; sri-krsna-sankirtanam - for the congregational chanting of the holy name of Krsna.

"Let there be victory for the chanting of the holy name of Lord Krsna, which can cleanse the mirror of the heart and stop the miseries of the blazing fire of material existence. That chanting is the waxing moon that spreads the white lotus of good fortune for all living entities. It is the life and soul of all education. The chanting of the holy name of Krishna expands the blissful ocean of transcendental life. It gives a cooling effect to everyone and enables one to taste full nectar at every step."

Sri Sanmodana Bhasyam by Srila Bhakti Vinoda Thakur

I begin this Sanmodana Bhasyam commentary on the eight Siksastaka verses written by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu by offering my humble obeisance at the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya and His eternal associates in the Sri Panca-tattva, namely Nityananda Avadhuta, Advaita Prabhu, Gadadhara Pandita and Srivasa Thakur.

The path of perfection

The path of devotional service is the highest perfection of life, and it is sought after in all the Vedic literatures. Applying his superior intelligence to repeated research of the Vedas, Lord Brahma ascertained that the best method of selfrealization is the awakening of one's loving attachment to Lord Hari, who dwells within everyone's heart.

Faith, eagerness, deep understanding and the association of pure devotees are required

Brahma's philosophical conclusion unequivocally establishes the supremacy of devotional service over fruitive activities, speculative knowledge, or any other process. However, pure devotional love of God is unattainable without great faith and intense eagerness to relish the nectarean pastimes of the Supreme Lord

and without deep understanding of the confidential truths of the scriptures. And even when profound faith has arisen, it is impossible without the association of saintly persons to discuss the transcendental topics of the Supreme Lord. Sadhu-sangha is integral to the hearing and chanting process of devotional service.

Thus the Lord Himself has declared, "It is only in the association of My pure devotees that discussions about My transcendental glory become spiritually potent and arouse loving devotional mellows within the inner core of one's heart."

The Lord's holy name, form, qualities and activities are particularly glorified in such company. In Lord Caitanya's teachings He first discusses these glories. In the fourth line, for example, the word param indicates that chanting Krsna's all purifying holy name is the very highest benediction. This follows the establishment of proper faith and association with saintly devotees. Thus the process of devotional service begins. The chanting of the holy name is not sentimentalism

This chanting is never to be confused with sentimental and pseudo-devotional chanting, however. In these Siksastaka verses Sri Caitanya explains in His own words the principles of sambandha (our eternal relationship with God), abhidheya (the means by which we can revive that relationship), and prayojana (the ultimate goal of that relationship for every living being). This commentary, then, will briefly examine each of these philosophical principles. As Lord Caitanya, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is lovingly served by all pure Vaisnava devotees, says: "Let the congregational chanting of the holy name be especially glorified."

Therefore, please hear just how the chanting of the holy name is victorious in the mundane world, which is a creation of the external energy of the Lord.

The philosophical background: simultaneous oneness and difference

Scripture certainly evinces the absolute oneness of the Supreme Truth. "Only the one non-dual substance existed before creation", we read. And in another place,

"Other than the one non-dual Brahman no varigatedness exist." In these statements, the all-pervading impersonal aspect of the Absolute Truth is established.

Simultaneously, the statement, "Everything is Brahman" emphasizes the personal and differentiated principle of the eternal and supreme Absolute Truth. Though differentiated personalism and undifferentaied impersonalism coexist in the Absolute Truth, it is the personal feature that is actually perceivable; impersonalism is not. Therefore, the personal feature of the Absolute Truth predominates.

Our spiritual master in the matter of scriptural conclusions, Srila Jiva Goswami, has therefore declared that the One Absolute Truth eternally exists in four features: as His original transcendental form, as His ever-expanding all-pervasive potency, as the living entities, and as the sum total of all matter. This is analogous to the features of the sun planet: the sun god himself, Surya; the powerful sun-globe; the sunshine; and the reflections of the sun's rays on other surfaces.

The point here is that God alone is the Supreme Absolute Truth, saktiman; He is the only source of all potencies or energies. The Brahma-sutra does argue the essential oneness of the Energetic Source (saktiman) and Energy (sakti), yet the Vedas conclude, "That Supreme Absolute Truth manifests Himself in a variety of forms. His potencies are multifarious." This proves that there exists an essential and eternal difference between the Energetic and His Energy, and that the inconceivable Absolute Truth acts in ways that are paradoxical and contradictory. The monistic school of Kevaladvaita-vada cannot successfully oppose with arguments this scriptural principle of simultaneous oneness and difference.

Three categories of manifestation

The Absolute Potent Supreme Truth manifests Himself in three categories: as His internal potency, as His marginal potency, and as His external potency.

Through the agency of His internal spiritual potency He displays the infinite transcendental realm, and He exists there eternally as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the proprietor of all His energetic expansions. That He may perform various personal pastimes, His internal potency exhibits the spiritual Vaikuntha planets within the transcendental realm.

The marginal potency is made up of the eternal living entities (jiva-souls) who are like rays or infinitesimal sparks of the sun. They are part and parcel of the Absolute Truth, non-different from Him in quality and different in quantity.

The external energy (maya) is but the reflection of the eternal spiritual realm. Maya establishes the hierarchy of various material conditions that the souls in her power become subject to.

The liberated and conditioned states

In each of their own ways, therefore, maya (the material energy), the living entities (the marginal spiritual energy) and Vaikuntha (transcendence) are different and non-different from the Supreme Lord.

As long as the jiva takes full shelter of the Supreme Lord, he remains a resident of Vaikuntha; but when his innate spiritual knowledge of the Lord is covered by forgetfulness, he is placed outside the transcendental realm. The jiva is compared to a ray of the sun, and when under the cloud of maya he becomes conditioned to an unconstitutional and hence unnatural type of existence. The jiva was created to support and participate in the Supreme Lord's transcendental pastimes, but due to his marginal nature he can fall under maya's spell to suffer the pangs of repeated birth and death. If, however, the jiva awakens to his original self, the dark mists of ignorance are dissipated and the long suffering of repeated birth and death at last comes to an end. Then he regains his true spiritual identity.

When the jiva meets a saintly person, he gradually acquires an eager taste for knowledge of scripture and attraction to the Supreme Lord Himself; when situated in his original constitutional position, the awakened soul is eligible to enter into a conjugal loving exchange with the Lord. One gets the chance to

associate with real saintly persons and take shelter of a bonafide spiritual master by sincerity and faith; only in this way can he hear the true import of the revealed scriptures.

After submissively hearing, one can chant the holy name; and gradually the real self, the re-spiritualized jiva, overcomes the illusory energy as his original nature becomes prominent. Such is the sublime effect of chanting the Lord's holy name. Chanting alone cleanses the heart - ceto-darpana-marjanam - and eventually brings out seven types of perfections in the spirit soul.

The phrase ceto-darpana-marjanam indicates the original transcendental nature of the living entity. Srila Jiva Gosvami explains that the living entity is a part and parcel of the Supreme Absolute Energetic Truth; He is the aggregate of all jivas. Like rays of the sun, the jivas are of the same spiritual nature as the Supreme; but they are infinitesimal in size.

Srila Baladeva Vidyabusana has similarly analyzed Godhead as the infinite Supreme Lord, with the jiva being His infinitesimal part. All transcendental qualities are eternally present in perfect fullness in the Supreme Lord. His pure ego is manifest as both absolute knowledge and knower. The jiva is also in possession of transcendental knowledge and pure ego, but to a partial degree. By logic, qualities of the sun like heat and light present must also be present in the sun's rays.

Of the two, then, it is the Supreme Godhead who is fully independent. He possesses and embodies all transcendental qualities. He is the origin of everything, and He enters into material nature and as its controller; He alone creates and maintains the material world. As the reservoir of all spiritual bliss, He relishes His own spiritual self and distributes the nectar of pure love of Godhead by the means of His pure devotional service. Indeed, He forces all living entities to taste that sweet nectar.

Innumerable living entities move through varied stages of existence; some become eternally conditioned, some become eternally liberated. When the jiva rejects the Supreme Lord, he is eternally ensnared by matter; but if he again aspires for the shelter of the Lord, the curtain of maya that separates the jiva from his own transcendental identity and qualities is forever removed; he is and immediately restored to his original pure self.

Cleansing the mirror of the mind reveals five truths

Therefore, it is clear that the jiva is infinitesimal. Though he is of a transcendental nature having pure ego, pure consciousness and pure form, if he turns away from God and contemplates material energy, his pure nature becomes contaminated by nescience.

In this way, the soul's consciousness is like a mirror: just as it is impossible to see one's face in a dusty mirror, it is similarly impossible to see the real self in the mirror of consciousness when it is covered by the dust of ignorance. But if one begins to render loving devotional service (particularly hearing and chanting the holy names and pastimes of Sri Krsna) under the influence of the Lord's hladhini pleasure potency, the material contamination of nescience is completely eradicated.

Then jiva's pure consciousness, which is a function of his pure ego, manifests itself. He sees reflected on the mirror of his pure ego the five principles of the Supreme Lord, the jiva, prakriti (nature), kala (time), and karma (action), with absolute clarity. He sees the reflection of his original identity without any distortion, and this helps him to know his inherent nature as an eternal servant of the Lord. When one becomes truly expert in serving the Lord, the propensity to enjoy material life is converted into a loving devotional mood of service.

Chanting is the soul's svadharma

The word bhava indicates the jiva's forcible subjection to repeated births in this world. Bhava is a continuous cycle of birth and death called mahadavagni (blazing fire), a raging conflagration that cannot be extinguished by any means other than the congregational chanting of Krsna's holy name. A question may arise at this point: when one is at last enlightened about his svadharma or eternal function as a liberated soul, does he then cease chanting Krsna's holy name? The

answer is no; the stoppage of chanting never occurs, because chanting God's name is verily the soul's svadharma. The phrase sreyah-kairava-candrika-vitarana confirms this by specifically conveying the sense of the eternal activity of the spirit soul in his original spiritual condition.

The greatest benefit

Jivas who are enslaved by maya prefer to enjoy material life, and this desire perpetuates their bondage to the cycle of birth and death. This the root cause of the three-fold miseries. But when the spirit soul becomes disgusted with material enjoyment and re-dedicates his time and energy to Lord Krsna's loving service, he reaps the greatest benefit. This benefit is compared to a the cluster of pristine white lotuses, for just as the moon's soothing rays cause the white lotuses to blossom, the rasa-laden rays of the chanting of the holy name stirs the enfolded petals of the lotus of the jiva's good fortune, causing it to open.

As it is said, "devotion gives birth to devotion": the sincere and faithful devotee must therefore follow the principles of elementary bhakti by regularly hearing and chanting the holy name until the first light of pure devotion begins to dawn in the heart. The closed lotus flower touched by the moon's rays awakens in full bloom, and similarly, when the congregational chanting of the holy name spreads the rays of bhava (the essence of hladini) and impregnates the soul's heart, rati (conjugal love for Sri Krsna) then lights up his consciousness, bestowing the highest benediction. This is what is meant by the "rays of the benediction moon."

The holy name reveals the soul's eternal relationship with Krsna

When does a person, having attained this level of pure devotion, acquire his pure spiritual identity? Lord Caitanya answers this question by saying, vidya-vadhu-jivanam, "the life of all transcendental knowledge." The Supreme Lord's sakti

has two aspects, vidya (knowledge) and avidya (ignorance). Yogamaya, the svarupa-sakti, is the Lord's internal spiritual potency. This potency is called vidya, whereas mahamaya, His external energy, is avidya; it is the latter that creates the material universe and covers the soul's svarupa.

When, by his sincerely following the process of hearing and chanting, the first rays of pure devotion finally appear on the horizon of the sadhaka's heart, then the Bhakti-devi, the eradicatress of all unwanted material desires detrimental to the Lord's service, eclipses the avidya potency. By suffusing the soul with spiritual knowledge, Bhakti-devi destroys both the gross and subtle coverings of the soul. Simultaneously, the jiva's original spiritual form becomes manifest so that he acquires the form of a gopi, for example, if his pure devotional propensities are steeped in the conjugal mood. Thus it stands proven that Krsna's holy name is the life and the soul of all transcendental knowledge (vidya-vadhu-jivanam.) Svarupa-sakti is therefore often said to be Krsna's wife.

When the gross and subtle material bodies of the jiva are completely destroyed, the infinitesimal soul regains his original pristine purity. Although the jiva is anu or minutely small, his capacity for spiritual happiness is not minute. To remove any doubt about this fact, Lord Caitanya adds, anandambudhi-vardhana, "It is an ever increasing ocean of bliss."

The Holy Name of the Lord, through the hladini potency, endlessly expands the natural bliss inherent in the soul; thus his happiness increases by leaps and bounds, fixing the soul eternally in one of the spiritual mellows (of dasya, sakhya, vatsalya or madhurya). When thus established in his eternal spiritual mellow, he continues to relish the limitless nectar at every step of the exchange of loving emotions in his transcendental relationship with the Supreme Lord.

Lord Krsna's enchanting beauty, His divine qualities, and His sublime pastimes are eternal and ever-fresh in ecstacy. Inebriated with divine prema, the pure jiva continuously drinks that ecstatic nectar, yet still the Lord's captivating beauty is forever new.

Pure love is never selfish

Now, one final question may arise: isn't the pursuit of happiness self-motivated and hence contrary to the principles of pure spiritual love? If so, how can jiva's happiness be called unalloyed and transcendental? As the answer, Lord Caitanya uses the expression sarvatma-snapanam: the bliss of Krsna consciousness is completely pure, being wholly free of any desire for self-satisfaction. Specifically, this means that in the natural course of pure devotional service the devotee attains the form of a maid-servant of Srimati Radharani, who embodies the zenith of mahabhava, or divine ecstasy. In Her service, the devotee participates in conjugal pastimes with the Lord and experiences unlimited bliss.

This sublime mood of service is therefore untainted by even the slightest tinge of lust or self-indulgent craving. Sarvatma-snapanam also confirms that in this state of perfect bliss neither the contamination of sayujya-mukti (becoming one with the Lord's impersonal aspect) nor the impurity of self-gratification can divert the devotee from his fixed position in pure Krsna consciousness.

May the chanting of the holy name of Krsna be ever victorious, for it is adorned with seven transcendental qualities; it is the form of eternality, knowledge, and the highest bliss, steeped in the wonderful and variegated amorous pastimes of Sri Sri Radha-Krsna.

Sri Caitanya Caritamrita, Antya 20.11,13,14:

"Simply by chanting the holy name of Lord Krishna one can be freed from all undesirable habits. This is the means of awakening all good fortune and initiating the flow of waves of love for Krsna.

"By performing congregational chanting of the Hare Krsna mantra one can destroy the sinful condition of material existence, purify the unclean heart and awaken all varieties of devotional service.

"The result of chanting is that one awakens his love for Krsna and tastes transcendental bliss. Ultimately, one attains the association of Krsna and engages in His devotional service, as if immersing himself in a great ocean of love."

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati

There are innumerable engagements in the execution of devotional service, and Srimad Bhagavatam and Hari-bhakti-vilasa have described many of them. Broadly, sixty-four limbs of devotional service are considered as the main engagements of bhakti.

Vaidhi-bhakti (devotional service according to rules and regulations) and raganuga-bhakti (spontaneous devotional service) are the two methods of executing these sixty-four principle engagements. In Srimad Bhagavatam Prahlada Maharaja glorifies pure and spontaneous devotional service as the best method; Lord Gaurasundara has identified the best engagement by saying, "The congregational chanting of the holy name of Lord Krishna is the most perfect form of devotional service."

The Absolute Truth defined

Those who know the transcendental Absolute Truth have defined the Supreme non-dual Substance as Brahman when it is preliminarily realized as eternity; when realized as eternity and knowledge, it is defined as Paramatma; when its transcendental nature of full knowledge, eternity and bliss is realized with all potencies, that Supreme Absolute Truth is known as Bhagavan.

That Supreme Personality of Godhead (Bhagavan) is called Vasudeva when He manifests His supreme opulence; when His opulence gives way to His loving conjugal mood, He is known as Krsna. As Narayana, He particularly reciprocates with His devotees in the rasas of santa and dasya; Lord Krsna is the worshipable object of all five rasas.

Lord Krsna's vaibhava-prakasa expansion is Lord Balarama, who rules Vaikuntha in His eternal catur-vyuha forms.

Japa, kirtana and samkirtana

The chanting of mantras that is properly supposed to take place in the mind is called japa; by japa, the chanter receives his desired perfection. Audible chanting in which the lips move is called kirtana; it is more effective than japa and avails the greatest benefit to the hearer. Samkirtana means total or perfect kirtana; all other devotional activities become unnecessary if one does samkirtana.

Samkirtana can never be partial or imperfect glorification of Lord Krsna's holy name, because partial or imperfect chanting of Krsna's name is unable to cause a wonderful transformation in the living entities. Partial or imperfect kirtana should not be accepted as samkirtana, as people would then doubt the potency of kirtana.

Let samkirtana, the total and perfect chanting of Krsna's holy name, be victorious. The experience of something mundane can only be incomplete, but the transcendental plane is never touched by material nature. Therefore, by the discussion of transcendental subject matter ─ Krsna, the supreme subject ─ one experiences all supra-mundane perfection. Amongst these perfections are seven that are especially invoked by chanting Lord Krsna's holy name, as explained in this verse by Lord Caitanya.

Samkirtana cleanses the heart

The chanting of Lord Krsna's holy name acts as a purifying agent upon the mirror of the living entities' contaminated hearts. The heart of the conditioned soul is completely covered over by three impurities: the desire to lord over matter, the godless attitude of being the sole enjoyer and/or renouncer of the fruits of one's actions, and atheism. These three treacherous contaminations form a sheath that covers the mirror of consciousness, causing one to reject His true nature as a jiva.

Krsna's holy name alone frees the consciousness of these impurities. By constantly chanting and thus taking complete shelter of the holy name, the jiva gradually perceives the reflection of his original form as the servant of Lord Krsna in the mirror of his consciousness. Samkirtana extinguishes the fire of material existence

This material existence appears to be pleasurable and sweet, but in reality it is like a fire in the depths of a forest; such a fire can reduce the entire forest to ashes. The faithless non-devotees must constantly tolerate the excruciating burning pain of the flaming forest fire of material existence. But when Lord Krsna's holy name is congregationally chanted in full perfection, the devotees, even though they may dwell in the material world, are never scorched by those flames.

Samkirtana spreads the rays of the benediction moon

Lord Krsna's holy name imparts the supreme goodness and munificence. Sreyah means benediction; kairava - white lilies; candrika - moon rays or white luminescence. Just as the rising moon illuminates and reveals the whiteness of the white water lily, similarly the chanting of Krsna's holy name reveals the greatest benediction for the entire universe. Human society cannot benefit from material desires for sense enjoyment, fruitive work or speculative knowledge. Chanting Krsna's name blesses all with the greatest prosperity.

Samkirtana is the life of all transcendental knowledge

The Mundaka Upanishad notes two types of knowledge or education: material knowledge and transcendental knowledge. Indirectly, the chanting of Lord Krsna's holy name is the cause and sustainer of even material knowledge, but primarily it is the life and soul of all transcendental knowledge. Chanting induces the jiva to break free from the shackles of false ego and prestige arising

from material education and leads him to understand his eternal relationship with Lord Krsna. The ultimate purpose of transcendental knowledge is to simply chant Krsna's holy name.

Samkirtana expands the ocean of transcendental bliss

The chanting of the Holy name expands the ocean of transcendental bliss. A limited expanse of water cannot be described as an ocean; therefore "unlimited bliss" is being compared to a boundless ocean. Chanting Krsna's name causes one to relish the sweet nectar of that ocean fully at every step. Because this transcendental experience is unfettered by imperfections, one can always relish full spiritual nectar from the chanting of Krsna's holy name.

Samkirtana awards the cooling shelter of Lord Krsna's lotus feet

The forms and features of Transcendence radiate a tender and cooling sheen that is perceivable through the chanting of Krsna's holy name. In the mundane realm, the body, mind and above them the soul not only become purified by chanting the holy name, but they too gradually and inevitably are touched by the cooling tenderness of the spiritual realm. The subtle and gross contaminations of the material conception of life and the acceptance of false designations have devoured the spirit soul, but all these afflictions can be ended by chanting the holy name. When the soul finds release from material designations, he becomes eager to reach Lord Krsna. He thus engages in devotional service, taking shelter in the cooling shade of the Lord's lotus feet.

Samkirtana completes all other processes of bhakti

In Bhakti-sandarbha 273 and in the Krama-sandarbha of the Seventh Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, Srila Jiva Goswami writes, ata eva yadyapyanya bhaktih kalau kartavya, tada kirtanakhya-bhakti-samyogenaiva, which means: "Although it is required even in Kali-yuga to practice the other eight limbs of devotional service, they must be performed in conjunction with the chanting of the holy name of the Lord."

References and quotes from Srila Bhakti Vinoda Thakur's "Sri Bhajana-rahasya"

The first perfection:

ceto-darpana-marjanam - "The holy name cleanses the mirror of the heart."

The contaminations that cover the mirror of consciousness is swept away by chanting the holy name; the holy name is the embodiment of profound spiritual bliss. For example Srila Rupa Goswami writes in the seventh stanza of the Namasthaka:

suditasrita-janartti-rasaye

ramya-cidghana sukhasvarupine

nama gokula mahotsavaya te

krsna purna-vapuse namo namah

"O holy name! O Lord Krsna! You dissipate the sufferings (offenses against the holy name) of Your surrendered devotees; You possess a transcendental form of ecstatic beauty and bliss and You appear as the figure of sublime joy for the residents of Gokula.

"You are therefore a fully spiritual entity of the same spiritual nature as the Vaikuntha planets. I offer my repeated obeisances to You."

The second perfection:

bhava-maha-davagni-nirvapanam - "The blazing fire of material existence is extinguished."

In Srimad Bhagavatam it is stated:

natah param karma-nibandha-krntanam

mumuksatam tirtha-padanukirtanat

na yat punah karmasu sajjate mano

rajas-tamobhyam kalilam tato 'nyatha

"Therefore one who desires freedom from material bondage should adopt the

process of chanting and glorifying the name, fame, form and pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, at whose feet all the holy places stand. One cannot derive the proper benefit from other methods, such as pious atonement, speculative knowledge and meditation in mystic yoga, because even after following such methods one takes to fruitive activities again, unable to control his mind, which is contaminated by the base qualities of nature, namely passion and ignorance."

The third perfection:

sreyah-kairavacandrika-vitaranam - "The moonlight opens the white lotus of good fortune."

A quote from Skanda Purana appears in Hari-bhakti-vilasa 11.234:

madhura-madhuram-etan-mangalam mangala nam

sakala-nigamaballi-satphalam citsvarupam

sakrd-api parigitam sraddhaya helaya va

bhrgu-vara nara-matram tarayet krsna-nama

"The holy name of Krsna the highest benediction above all other benedictions for humanity, sweeter than the sweet honey, the eternal fruit of transcendental knowledge of the tree of entire sruti scriptures. O best of Bhagavas! If anyone chants Lord Krishna's name just once without offence, whether he chants with faith or indifferently, the holy name immediately liberates him."

The fourth perfection:

vidya-vadhu-jivanam - "The holy name is the life of transcendental knowledge (the Lord's own wife)."

In the Garuda Purana it is stated:

adicchasi param jnanam jnanad yat paramam padam

tadadarena rajendra kuru govinda kirtanam

"O best of kings! If you are desirous of acquiring that extraordinary knowledge by which the Supreme Goal is realized, then chant Lord Govinda's name with love and devotion."

Again in Srimad Bhagavatam 3.5.40:

dhatar yad asmin bhava isa jivas

tapa-trayenabhihata na sarma

atman labhante bhagavams tavanghri-

cchayam sa-vidyam ata asrayema

"O Father, O Lord, O Personality of Godhead, the living entities in the material world can never have any happiness because they are overwhelmed by three

kinds of miseries. Therefore they take shelter of the shade of Your lotus feet, which are full of knowledge, and we also thus take shelter of them."

In Srimad Bhagavatam 4.29.49, there is the phrase sa vidya tanmatiryaya, which means: "Real knowledge or education is that realization which increases our attachment for the Supreme Lord."

ye saktite krsne mati kare udbhabana

bidya-name sei kare abidya khandana

krsna-nama sei bidyabadhura jibana

krsna-padapadme ye karaye sthira mana

"That potency which invokes loving attachment for Krsna in the heart is called the knowledge that destroys nescience. The holy name of Krsna is the life and soul of all knowledge and it fastens the heart firmly at Krsna's lotus feet."

The fifth perfection:

anandambudhi-vardhanam — "The holy name increases the ocean of bliss."

In the Srimad Bhagavatam, 8.3.20:

ekantino yasya kancanartham

vanchanti ye bhagavat-prapannah

aty-adbhutam tac-caritam sumangalam

gayanta ananda-samudra-magnah

"Unalloyed devotees, who have no desire other than to serve the Lord, worship Him in full surrender and always hear and chant about His activities, which are most wonderful and auspicious. Thus they always merge in an ocean of transcendental bliss. Such devotees never ask the Lord for any benediction."

The sixth perfection:

pratipadam purna-amrta-asvadanam - "The holy name gives a taste of the full nectar at every step."

From the Padma Purana:

tebhyo namo'stu bhava-baridhi-jirna-panka-

sammagna-moksana-vicaksana-padukebhyah

krsneti varna-yugalam sravanena yesam

anandathur-bhavati narttitaromavrnda

"I offer my respectful obeisances at the feet of that extra-ordinary personality whose body shivers with sublime joy and horripilates with ecstasy at the sound of Krsna's sweet name, and who is expert in redeeming the conditioned souls engrossed in the mire of the ocean of repeated birth and death."

The seventh perfection:

sarvatma-snapanam - "The holy name bathes everyone in the cooling sheen of the Supreme Self."

In the Srimad Bhagavatam, 12.12.48:

sankirtyamano bhagavan anantah

srutanubhavo vyasanam hi pumsam

pravisya cittam vidhunoty asesam

yatha tamo'rko'bhram ivati-vatah

"When people properly glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead or simply hear about His power, the Lord personally enters their hearts and cleanses away every trace of misfortune, just as the sun removes the darkness or as a powerful wind drives away the clouds."

sruta anubhuta yata anartha-sanyoga

sri-krsna-kirtane saba haya ta'biyoga

yerupa bayute megha surya tamah nase

eitte prabesiya dosa asesa binase

krsna-nama-asraye eittadarpana-marjana

ati sighra labhe jiba krsna-prema-dhana

"All the unwanted things that were heard and experienced (pertaining to this world of nescience) are immediately expelled from the mind and heart by chanting the holy name of Krsna. Just as the clouds that blocked the sunlight are riven by the winds, so the name upon entering the heart destroys the dark nescience within. By taking shelter of the holy name of Krsna the jiva's heart is cleansed very quickly, thus he attains the highest spiritual experiences of love of Godhead."

In the Namastaka, stanza 8:

narada-vinojjivana sudharmi-niryyasa-madhuripura

tvam krsna-nama kamam sphura me rasane rasena sada

"O holy name of Krsna! You are the life-sustaining elixir of Sri Narada Muni's vina and the exhilarating waves on the ocean of nectar. Therefore I beg You to eternally remain ecstatically dancing on my tongue."

Again in the Namastaka, stanza 2:

jaya namadheya munivrndaeya janaranjanaya paramaksarakrte

tvamanadaradapi managudiritam nikhilograta papataham vilumpasi

"All glory to You, O holy name! The sages have always sung hymns praising You, You have now appeared in the transcendental form of the supreme syllable for the pleasure of the entire humanity. Even if one chants those syllables with

indifference (i.e. the four types of namabhasa - indirectly, jokingly, derisively, neglectfully) even then You are capable of destroying the most dreadful sinful reactions; thus all of one's sufferings are extirpated. You are always victorious."

In Caitanya Bhagavata, Madhya 23.76-77:

hare krsna hare krsna krsna krsna hare hare

hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare

prabhu kahe - kahilan ei mahamantra

iha japa giya sabe kariya nirbandha

iha haite sarba-siddhi haibe sabara

sarba-krsna baka'ithe bidhi nahi ara

'Lord Caitanya said, "I am giving you this mahamantra: hare krsna hare krsna krsna krsna hare hare hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare; now go and chant it with earnest enthusiasm.

Since by this chanting you receive all the perfections in life, you should continue to chant incessantly. There are no rules or regulations for chanting this mahamantra."'

Sloka 2

namnam akari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis

tatrapita niyamitah smarane na kalah

etadrsi tava krpa bhagavan mamapi

durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah

namnam - of the holy names of the Lord; akari - manifested; bahudha - various kinds; nija-sarva-saktih - all kinds of personal potency; tatra - in that; arpita - bestowed; niyamitah - restricted; smarane - in remembering; na - not; kalah - consideration of time; etadrsi - so much; tava - Your; krpa - mercy; bhagavan - O Lord; mama - My; api - although; durdaivam - misfortune; idrsam - such; iha - in this (the holy name); ajani - was born; na - not; anuragah - attachment.

"My Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, in Your holy name there is all good fortune for the living entity, and therefore You have many names, such as Krsna and Govinda, by which You expand Yourself. You have invested all Your potencies in those names, and there are no hard and fast rules for remembering them. My dear Lord, although You bestow such mercy upon the fallen, conditioned souls by liberally teaching Your holy names, I am so unfortunate that I commit offenses while chanting the holy name, and therefore I do not achieve attachment for chanting."

Sri Sanmodana Bhashyam

The chanting of Krsna's holy name has four aspects, consisting of the glorification of the Lord's name, form, qualities and pastimes. Krsna's holy name is the original seed of all joys, because the holy name and He who is designated by that name are one and the same, being non-different in principle.

Chanting the holy name is most beneficial for one and all in every respect;

therefore Lord Sri Krsna Caitanya Himself demonstrates the super-excellent qualities of the holy name. In order to evoke genuine faith in the holy name, Lord Caitanya prays, "O Lord! O most munificent One! Becoming compassionate seeing our destitute situation as souls conditioned by matter, You have of Your own accord manifested Your holy name, which is non-different from Yourself.

"Your holy name is of two types, principal and secondary. Among Your principle names are Hari, Krsna, Govinda, Acyuta, Rama, Ananta, and Vishnu; Brahma, Supersoul, Supreme Controller, Maintainer, Creator, and Mahendra are secondary names. You have invested all Your internal spiritual potencies and Your transcendental qualities in Your principal names." Innumerable scriptural statements substantiate this fact; a few are cited below.

Hearing the holy name once is as good as seeing Krsna directly

"My Lord, one can be immediately freed from all material contaminations just by seeing You. But if seeing You personally is not possible, then by simply hearing only once the holy name of Your Lordship even Candalas, dog-eating men of the lowest class, are freed from their impurities, just as if they had seen You."

There is no need to recite Vedic mantras

"If the amount of time a dvija-brahmana expends in the study and recitation of the Vedic mantras would be utilized in chanting even just the Lord's secondary names, that brahmana would incur more benefit; of this there is no doubt. But one who just chants the two syllables of the holy name Hari is understood to have already mastered the four Vedas - Rg, Sama, Yajur and Atharva. Therefore it is not advisable to spent time in studying the Vedas; instead the holy name of Govinda should be chanted continuously, for His name is glorified eternally."

The holy name is the way to perfection for everyone

"O King, constant chanting of the holy name of the Lord after the ways of great authorities is the doubtless and fearless way of success for all, including those who are free from all material desires, those who are desirous of material enjoyment, and also those who are self-satisfied by dint of transcendental knowledge."

The holy name reveals His glories even to the uninformed chanter

"O Lord Visnu! Your holy name is fully spiritual and self-manifested. So even if one not thoroughly informed of its glories chants the holy name, he will gradually acquire perfect understanding just by chanting. Lord Brahma was the first to disseminate the transcendental sound om; the mere utterance of this sound dispelled his ignorance and fear of death. Therefore the vibration om is also known as tarak Brahma."

Chanting without offense fixes one in devotional service

"Any person who says the name Hari just once without offense immediately becomes resolved to serve the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord unconditionally and thus strives for liberation from the clutches of illusion."

The offender's heart is steel-framed

"Certainly that heart is steel framed which inspite of one's chanting the holy name of the Lord with concentration, does not change when ecstasy takes place, tears fill the eyes and hairs stand on end."

The holy name is the ripened fruit of the Vedas

"O respected Bhrigu! The holy name of Krsna is more nectarean than the sweetest honey; most beneficial amongst all auspicious activities; and is the eternal, mature and transcendental fruit of the desire-fulfilling tree of the Vedas. If any person utters this holy name even once, casually or in full sincerity - but without offenses - then the holy name instantaneously liberates the chanter."

Krsna becomes the chanter's property

"O Arjuna! I declare to You truly that anyone can purchase Me just by chanting My name and abiding by Me. I become his property, fully dependent on him."

The holy name is like a touchstone gem

"The holy name of Krsna is transcendentally blissful. Like a touchstone gem it bestows all spiritual benedictions, for it is Krsna Himself. Krsna's name is complete, and it is the form of transcendental mellows. It is not a material name under any conditions, and it is no less powerful than Krsna Himself. Since Krsna's name is not contaminated by the material qualities, there is no question of its being involved with maya. Krsna's name is always liberated and spiritual; it is never conditioned by the laws of material nature. This is because the name

of Krsna and Krsna Himself are identical."

The name is not understood by materialists

"No one can understand the transcendental nature of the name, form, quality and pastimes of Sri Krishna through his materially contaminated senses. Only when one becomes spiritually saturated by transcendental service to the Lord are the transcendental name, form, quality and pastimes of the Lord revealed to him."

From the above quotations of different revealed scriptures we can conclude that the holy name is endowed with unlimited spiritual potencies. In the practice of karma, jnana, yoga, etc. the sadhaka is bound by the strict rules of scripture and the factors of time, place and circumstances. But in chanting and remembering the Lord's name there is no such consideration of time, place or circumstances - this indeed is an example of Lord's fathomless mercy upon us.

Yet in spite of all this it is truly a matter of great regret that we cannot develop even a drop of attraction for this most magnanimous holy name. The word durdaiva or misfortune is synonymous with offenses to the holy name (namaparadha). A concise resume of these offenses is given below.

The ten offenses against the holy name

1) Criticizing and finding faults in devotees or sadhus is a serious offence against the holy name. How can the name tolerate criticism of devotees who have dedicated their lives to propagating the glories of the Name? Therefore offending sadhus or saintly person is the first namaparadha.

2) Those who try to comprehend spiritual subject matter with material intelligence falsely conclude that Lord Visnu's name, form, qualities and pastimes are different from the Lord Himself. In other words, they impose

material characteristics and limitations on spirituality. Thus they equate demigods like Siva and Brahma with the Supreme Lord Visnu, or even think that these demigods are independent of Lord Visnu. The chanting of such persons is offensive.

3) It is an offense against the holy name to consider the spiritual master (who is self-realized and perfect in the chanting of the holy name) to be an ordinary mortal who possesses a material body, and to thus disobey and disregard him.

4) It is an offense to criticize and find fault with the Vedas, Puranas and other corollary scriptures.

5) It is an offense to think the glories of the holy name are exaggerated.

6) It is an offense to consider the holy name to be fictitious or concocted.

7) One who commits sinful activities on the strength of chanting the holy name can never be exonerated from this offense by any process, including the disciplines of yama, niyama, dhyana, meditation and so on in the yoga system.

8) Only a person in illusion thinks that mundane ritualistic activities such as charity, fasting, vows, abnegation, austerity and so on are on the same level as the transcendental activity of chanting the holy name.

9) It is also an offense to instruct a faithless person who is adverse to hearing the name on the glories of the holy name.

10) After hearing the wonderful qualities of the name, it is offensive to maintain material attachments of 'me' and 'mine'. This means one has not developed a genuine attraction or interest for chanting.

It is imperative that a devotee avoids these ten offenses in chanting the holy name of the Lord. He must never try to counteract his sins or accrue piety through ritualistic observances, because he is neither required nor even eligible to perform karma-kanda rituals. If perchance a devotee commits a namaparadha, then with an anxious heart he should go on chanting continuously. Such continuous chanting will protect him from committing further offenses as well as uproot his previous offenses. The scriptures clearly state that chanting alone can absolve all offenses and sinful reaction. Hence chanting the holy name is the best shelter for everyone. Chanting removes the very desire to commit namaparadha

and gradually elevates one to the highest spiritual platform of Krsna-prema.

When one is free from offenses, his attachment for the Name increases; he will soon attain all perfection. Here `all perfection' is synonymous to Krsna-prema. This is Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's second instruction.

Sri Caitanya Caritamrita, Antya 20.17-19:

"Because people vary in their desires, You have distributed various holy names by Your mercy. Regardless of time or place, one who chants the holy name, even while eating or sleeping, attains all perfection. You have invested Your full potency in such individual holy name, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attachment for chanting Your holy names."

Commentary

"O Lord! Out of Your causeless mercy You have manifested innumerable names and have empowered these names with all Your own potencies. You have not imposed rigid rules for chanting and remembering Your names, i.e., You have not laid down conditions barring anyone to chant or remember Your name even during eating, reclining, sleeping etc. But I am so wretched that I am not attracted to Your names."

The word bahu or many indicates the two types of the Lord's names, principal and secondary. The principal names include Krsna, Radha-ramana, Gopi-jana-vallabha, etc. that convey the loving conjugal mood of the Lord; and Rama, Vasudeva, Narasimha, etc. that convey His awe-inspiring opulent mood.

Brahman, Paramatma etc. are His secondary names; they are incomplete, separated and partial names. The Lord's principal names are non-different from the Lord and possess all His energies; the secondary names are also impregnated

with His pastime potencies but in partial degrees only.

The jiva brings about his own misfortune

The jiva was imprisoned in the illusory, ephemeral kingdom of maya due to his turning away from Lord Krsna. Thus the conditioned soul has brought great misfortune upon himself; that misfortune is first and foremost his reluctance to serve the Lord.

Anyabhilasita means the base material desires which, when engaged in the karma and jnana processes, lead to different levels of material enjoyments. Thus his base desires for sense gratification, karma and jnana have deluded the jiva into forgetting his real svarupa (transcendental identity); they have propelled him into a whirlpool of misery.

Under the spell of anyabhilasita he is intoxicated by immediate sensual pleasures. Pious activities goad him to yearn for heavenly pleasures; his enjoyment of matter leads to frustration, and so he becomes engrossed in striving to realize the impersonal, non-differentiated Brahman.

The jiva's own eternal desire is to engage in Lord Krsna's service, but the residue of the practice of these three paths has smothered this proclivity and hidden his good fortune. Now he is caught up in the endless pursuit of religiosity, material wealth, and sense gratification; thereafter, being harassed by the frustrations of his own sins, anarthas and lust, he pursues liberation.

By the same misfortune, he chants offensively

In this way he has become the choice candidate for committing namaparadhas. If he takes up chanting, he is unable to avoid the ten offenses. Due to his offenses, he cannot chant purely.

He first gets the opportunity to chant when he soberly reviews the hopeless chaos of the never-ending conflict in his life; such introspection forces the jiva to deeply consider his own good. The yearning for a peaceful solution to the endless torment of the unquenchable thirst for enjoyment draws him to the shelter of the holy name of the Lord.

Thus he begins to chant, initially indifferent to the proper understanding of sambandha-jnana (knowledge of the relationship between God, His sakti, and the jiva). Such chanting is known as namabhasa or the semblance of the pure name. Namabasa is not the holy name proper, but it results in the severance of the jiva's ties with the material mentality: he no longer sees everything materially. Gradually he becomes eligible to render transcendental devotional service to the Supreme Lord. But only very elevated souls who have become completely immune to the onslaught of misfortune and offense can obtain pure love of Krsna by inoffensive chanting.

Mahaprabhu's mercy

Lord Caitanya, knowing the ill fate of the conditioned souls of this age, descended to spread the message of the chanting the holy name of God. He saw in the jivas their apathy to the holy name, and gave voice to it in this verse. Yet even in such depths of human misfortune the Lord's causeless mercy is available.

There is indeed a way to escape the steely clutches of namaparadha. First one must recognize and isolate his offenses; he must conscientiously avoid them, simultaneously chanting continuously. This will keep namaparadha at bay, allowing one to reap the benefit of namabhasa chanting.

Namabhasa chanting elevates one to actual mukti or liberation, meaning freedom from the influence of and dependence upon matter; only thereafter does one become competent to chant the pure name.

The opportunity afforded to us by namabhasa chanting is but an indication of the Lord's unlimitedly flowing compassion. Thus, the simple chanting of the principal names of God brings about the best and only real benediction to

humanity.

When the jiva attempts to grasp at insignificant, evanescent material fruits, he is enmeshed in stringent regulations, the factors of time, place and circumstance, and the struggle with the limitations of his own ability to perform the complicated rituals. But one who chants the holy name of the Supreme Lord faces no such insurmountable obstacles, by the Lord's causeless mercy. In the Caitanya Bhagavata we find this statement: "Always remember to chant the holy name in the sleeping, eating or waking hours. There are no hard and fast rules of chanting, so chant all the time." The same instruction is repeated in the Sri Caitanya Caritamrita.

Scriptural statements relevant to this sloka:

nija-sarva-saktis-tatra-arpita - "All transcendental potencies are invested within the holy name."

In the Skandha Purana it is stated:

"The potency to destroy sin, the all-auspicious potency, the potencies residing in pious acts of charity, vows, penances etc., the potencies of all the places of pilgrimage, the potencies in the asvamedha and rajasuya yajnas, the potency in knowledge of the Absolute - these potencies have been assembled together by the Supreme Lord Hari and channeled into His holy name, making it all powerful."

niyamitah smarane na kalah - "There is no fixed time or rule for remembering the Lord."

From the Vaisvanara Samhita:

"There are no fixed times or considerations of cleanliness and uncleanness regarding the chanting of the holy name. Simply the repeated utterance of Rama, Rama is enough to liberate the jiva from his material bondage."

durdaivam-idrsam-ihajani na anuragah - "As unfortunate as I am, I have no taste."

Srimad Bhagavatam 3.9.3) states:

"O my Lord, persons who are bereft of the all-auspicious performance of chanting and hearing about Your transcendental activities are certainly unfortunate and are also bereft of good sense. They engage in inauspicious activities, enjoying sense gratification for a very little while."

Sloka 3

trnad api sunicena

taror iva sahisnuna

amanina manadena

kiraniyah sada harih

trnat api - than downtrodden grass; sunicena - being lower; taroh - than a tree; iva - like; sahisnuna - with tolerance; amanina - without being puffed up by false pride; manadena - giving respect to all; kirtaniyah - to be chanted; sada - always; harih - the holy name of the Lord.

"One who thinks himself lower than the grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect personal honor but is always prepared to give all respect to others, can very easily always chant the holy name of the Lord."

Sri Sanmodana Bhasyam

The devotee who chants the name offenselessly is adorned by four very special qualities. These are: a natural meekness and humility because of total detachment from matter; pure compassion unencumbered by envy; a spotless heart free from mundane, false prestige; a proper respectful attitude towards everyone. When the holy name, the full embodiment of the transcendental rasas, appears in the sadhaka's heart, his attitude of mind is transformed. He thinks, "I am constitutionally an infinitesimal eternal servitor of Lord Krsna. I have no real need for materialism. But, alas - because of my estrangement from Krsna's lotus feet, I find myself in my present predicament.

Being bound to the grinding wheel of repeated birth and death, I am suffering untold miseries. The sadhaka meekly embraces yukta-vairagya: "Now, by the grace of my spiritual master and the Vaisnavas, I have come to realize that only by devotional service to the Supreme Lord can I find release from the distresses of material existence, be reinstated in my constitutional position, regain my spiritual identity, and attain love of God.

"But as long as I am not freed from the chains of material bondage, I am obliged to embrace the path of yukta-vairagya (renunciation by actively engaging the senses in the Lord's service). Relying upon sambandha-jnana, I will have to accept matter for my bare necessities to keep body and soul together. "Misery

stemming from paucity, disease, calamity and old age, and happiness caused by wealth, health, beauty, and education, are called prarabdha karmic reactions and must be experienced as inseparable features of this present body. I will not be able to avoid such reactions. In any case, loss and gain, birth and death, suffering and joy are left behind when one ascends to the spiritual plane. "Therefore these mundane matters are inconsequential to my actual life. I will approach the Lord with utmost humility and pray, 'O Krsna! O Govinda! O Lord of my heart, when will I be engaged in Your divine service? Kindly be merciful upon this lowly creature now and quickly accept me as Your servitor.' "In this mood I may either renounce my family or remain at home living frugally. It doesn't matter, for by Krsna's grace I will somehow sustain my life. "A dead straw in the street is simply matter; accordingly, its ego or identity naturally corresponds to its factual existence, for a straw is but a straw. But my present ego is ahankara, made up of gross and subtle coverings; it does not ally with my original spiritual self. The straw's abhiman or ego is factual but my material ego is unreal. Therefore it is only correct that I become more humble than the straw in the street."

The sadhaka is tolerant and compassionate

The purport of the expression taror api sahisnuna, "more tolerant than a tree", is as follows. The tree is so tolerant that it cannot even neglect to offer its cooling shade and succulent fruits to the very person who is going to cut it down. The devotee of Lord Krsna is even more kind because he is compassionate to everyone, friend or foe, desiring only their best. One who chants the holy name without offenses is overwhelmed with thoughts of the well-being of others. He thinks, "O Lord! My friends, companions and all other living entities are very unfortunate. How shall they be able develop love and attraction for chanting Your all-auspicious name? They are sunken in the quagmire of familial attachments, wealth and property, petty successes and reverses, lost and profit, joys and sufferings, birth and death and on and on - all because they are blinded by maya. "I see not the slightest indication that they are disgusted with this futile material existence filled only with anarthas (unwanted things). They are being slowly strangled by the noose of their unlimited desires for sense gratification. They spend their valuable time busying themselves in useless affairs of karma and jnana. How can these persons be made interested in self-realization?"

Entreating the Lord in this manner, the devotee's heart becomes flooded with spiritual emotions. He loudly sings: harer nama harer nama hare namaiva kevalam kalau nasty eva nasty eva nasty eva gatir anyatha ― "In the age of Kali, there is no other way, there is no other way, no other way than chanting the holy name of Lord Hari!"

The sadhaka's heart is spotlessly free of prestige

The word amani reveals the third quality of the devotee whose chanting is decorated with offenselessness: his heart is spotlessly free from mundane ego and false prestige. The false designations of the jiva's gross and subtle body have grown up out of nescience. Yogic mystic powers, opulence, good looks, high birth, strength, position, influence are all features of his ahankara; they are incompatible with his real spiritual identity; indeed, they are totally alien and false. Having a spotless heart devoid false ego and prestige means specifically that the devotee completely distances himself from all unreal designations. But what about the pride that may well follow the subjugation of false designations? In spite of his being highly respected, the devotee who demonstrates tolerance, humility and a pure heart is a fit candidate to chant purely. He will take care to avoid becoming proud of being honored as brahmana (if he is a householder) or sannyasi (if he is a renunciate); he concentrates on the lotus feet of Lord Krsna and chants His holy name.

The sadhaka offers all respects to others

The word manada means to offer all respect to others. This is the fourth symptom of a devotee who chants without offenses. He understands that all living entities are Krsna's eternal servants, so he is never envious or spiteful to anyone. He pleases everyone with sweet sublime words and exemplary actions that bring benediction to the world. He offers respect to distinguished personalities such as learned brahmanas; to Brahma, Siva and other demigods he

offers obeisance with utmost humility, praying to them for increasing his devotion to Lord Krsna; and to elevated Vaisnavas and pure devotees he offers service with heart and soul.

The chanting of the holy name that is felicitated with the above mentioned four qualities is the highest success in human life. This is the declaration of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the most magnanimous avatara and saviour of the fallen souls of Kaliyuga. Sri Caitanya Caritamrita, Antya 20.22-26: "These are the symptoms of one who chants the Hare Krsna maha-mantra. Although he is very exalted, he thinks himself lower than the grass on the ground, and like a tree he tolerates everything in two ways. "When a tree is cut down, it does not protests and even when drying up, it does not ask anyone for water. The tree delivers fruits, flowers and whatever it possesses to anyone and everyone.

It tolerates scorching heat and torrents of rain, yet it still gives shelter to others. "Although a Vaishnava is the most exalted person, he is prideless and gives all respect to everyone, knowing everyone to be the resting place of Krsna. If one chants the holy name of Lord Krsna in this manner he will certainly awaken his dormant love for Krsna's lotus feet."

Commentary

Because the jiva is by constitution an eternal servant of Lord Krsna, his eternal dharma or religion is chanting the holy name, whether he is a resident of this material world or enters into the spiritual sky. There is no better means for attaining all-around benefit and success for humanity then the chanting of the holy name, for chanting brings good fortune to others and all-auspiciousness to the self.

How the pure name is attained

This sloka was composed for the sole reason of clearly establishing how to avoid namaparadha and namabhasa in chanting. One whose intelligence avoids Krsna and rushes headlong after the intoxication of material enjoyment can never perceive his true position as but an infinitesimal spark of consciousness. One who thinks he is the enjoyer can never admit his insignificance. Nor is he tolerant by nature; he'll not like to give up his false ego and false prestige. A gross sense enjoyer is thoroughly unwilling and incapable of ungrudgingly offering respect to another enjoyer like himself; it is the materialist's habit to be insincere in his dealings with others, to the point of being obnoxious. But the Vaisnava who actually finds ecstasy in the holy name is more humble than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree; he is unconcerned and even unwilling to receive respect, but eager to offer respect to others. Only such an elevated soul is awarded constant association of the holy name in kirtana.

Offenseless chanters never exploit others

When these pure souls offer glorification and obeisances to the spiritual master and other senior Vaisnavas, they do so because of their quality of manada (respecting others according to station); when they advise and enthuse disciples and sadhakas on the process of chanting, showering them with appreciative and even laudatory words spoken in great affection, their quality of amani (expecting no respect) is revealed.

The pure devotee never exploits the advantageous material position of his elevated status; therefore, he is tolerant of the anger and dismay of the fools who resent his prominence. In this way he exhibits deep forbearance. The offenseless chanter sees himself as lower than the straw in the street that is trampled by the walking masses. Such a saintly soul never thinks, "I am a Vaisnava", or "I am a guru." Indeed, he always thinks himself a disciple of everyone, most meek and fallen. Knowing every atom and every infinitesimal spirit soul to be the residence of Lord Krsna, he never treats anyone as inferior to himself, nor does he require anything from anyone in this world. Even if others are envious and spiteful to him, he never retaliates; on the contrary, he prays for his tormentors' wellbeing. Real humility means never concocting something new

The devotee who chants purely never rejects the devotional process he received from his spiritual master by introducing new methods, e.g. by replacing the maha-mantra with some concocted and imaginary rhyme. A Vaisnava's humility is not to be questioned if he preaches widely the glories of the holy name by writing new books as long as this is done strictly in accordance with the instructions of his spiritual master. But if one tries to trick people, making a show of humility only to gain the adoration of the masses, that is not accepted as humility.

The pure chanter of the holy name never visualizes the exploitable form of "enjoyable matter"; he sees everything in this world as paraphernalia for the service of Lord Krsna and His associates and devotees. Enjoying this world is simply never considered, because the devotee takes the position of a submissive hearer and never considers disassociating himself from the maha-mantra he received from his spiritual master. Thus he is neither eager or interested in propagating new ideas or opinions. A devotee never thinks "I am someone's guru" One who regards himself to be the guru of any Vaisnava devotee rings humility's death knell. The plain truth is that he who does not heed Lord Caitanya's instructions in this Siksastaka is doomed to pursue material gain with the sole intention of appeasing the senses at the cost of his real spiritual identity.

Even if he is a spiritual master, he will simply hanker for recognition in that position. The holy name can never be chanted by such an offender. No matter how sincere and faithful his disciples may be, they will never become worthy of receiving and chanting the pure holy name if they hear his offensive chanting. Scriptural statements relevant to this sloka: kirtaniyah sada harih - "Constantly chanting the holy name"

Srimad Bhagavatam 2.1.11: "O King, constant chanting of the holy name of the Lord after the ways of the great authorities is the doubtless and fearless way of success for all , including those who are free from all material desires, those who are desirous of all material enjoyment and also those who are self-satisfied by dint of transcendental knowledge." Mukundamala-stotra, sloka 37: "O fool! O you rascal! This constantly changing body is under attack from innumerable attachments and diseases that are due it by the law of karma, and death is a certainty; what remedial measures have you undertaken? Simply drink the medicine of Krishna's name which is the cure for all diseases."

Sloka 4

na dhanam na janam na sundarim

kavitam va jagadisa kamaye

mama janmani jamanisvare

bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi

na - not; dhanam - riches; na - not; janam - followers; na - not; sundarim - a very beautiful woman; kavitam - fruitive activities described in flowery language; va - or; jagatisa – O Lord of the universe; kamaye - I desire; mama - My; janmani - in birth; janmani - after birth; isvare - unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead; bhavatat - let there be; bhaktih - devotional service; ahaituki - with no motives; tvayi - unto You.

"Lord of the universe, I do not desire material wealth, materialistic followers, a beautiful wife or fruitive activities described in flowery language. All I want, life after life, is unmotivated devotional service unto You."

Sri Sanmodana Bhasyam

The sadhaka must attentively receive the sound of the holy name from the spiritual master; thereafter he may chant the name devoid of namaparadhas. By this process, the previously mentioned four qualities will gradually appear in his heart.

But if the sadhaka's attachment to sensual pleasures is not severed, his original spiritual identity cannot manifest. Thus bhakti, the flavor of the hladini potency, cannot be transformed into the bhava of conjugal attraction.

This verse explains the pure form of sadhana-bhakti (here sadhana-bhakti means the process of chanting) in two ways. The direct explanation stresses the principal symptom of bhakti, which is loving devotional service to Sri Krsna (bhava-bhakti); while the expressions 'na dhanam na janam ...' point to the attendant symptom of pure bhakti.

The secondary symptom of bhakti has two concomitants - freedom from all other desires (anyabhilasita sunyam) outside the path of bhakti, and the absence of the influence of karma and jnana. As long as loving devotion to Krsna (anukulyam krsnaanusilam) is encumbered by anyabhilasitam, karma, jnana, yoga and so on, bhakti cannot be uttama (exalted); it is visible merely as shadow devotion or bhakti-abhasa.

How to cross beyond bhakti-abhasa

This sloka in fact reveals how this shadow bhakti is to be dissipated. It is stated here, `O Lord! I do not hanker for dhanam (wealth), janam (following), or sundarim kavitam (beautiful poetry or literature).' Here dhanam means the wealth of piety incurred by strictly following the path of varnasrama (which includes materialistic karma-kanda activities and so on).

Further clarified, dhanam implies all the paraphernalia, gross and subtle, required to fulfill a person's desires for senses enjoyment in this world and in heaven. The word janam indicates wife, sons, servants, subjects, friends, relatives, and so on.

Education or learning is correctly defined as the culture that promotes attraction to and attachment for the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord. The expression sundarim kavitam does not refer to narratives of Lord Krsna's pastimes, or conclusive philosophical examinations of scripture, or transcendental literatures or poetry; rather, it refers to mundane literatures and compositions. Such trivia

are rejected. And what is desired? The loving service of Krsna, even in birth after birth; let it be unwavering devotion devoid of any conditions.

Unconditional devotion means that which is guided by no consideration other than Krsna's satisfaction.

Pure devotion never depends on liberation

In the jiva's struggle to be victorious over all the many miseries suffered in the cycle of repeated birth and death, ultimate victory lies ever beyond his capacity ─ it depends entirely on the Supreme Lord's will. All misery will automatically cease when, by the Lord's desire, the jiva is saved from the cycle of birth and death. Therefore, what is the use of a Godless prayer for liberation that violates the precepts of pure devotion?

This prayer of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu expresses the soul's urgent need of bhava-bhakti over all else: "Without waiting for the cycle of birth and death to be stopped by the Lord's grace, let me now have unconditional devotion at Krsna's lotus feet life after life, regardless of what my present material situation is."

Sri Caitanya Caritamrita Antya 20.27,28,30:

"As Lord Caitanya spoke in this way, His humility increased and He began praying to Krsna that He could discharge pure devotional service.

"Wherever there is a relationship of love of Godhead, its natural symptom is that the devotee does not think himself a devotee. Instead, he always thinks that he has not even a drop of love for Krsna.

"'My dear Lord Krsna, I do not want material wealth from You, nor do I want followers, a beautiful wife or the results of fruitive activities. I only pray that by Your causeless mercy You give Me pure devotional service to You, life after

life.'"

Commentary

"O Lord of the universe! I have no desire for material wealth, following, or beautiful poetry. You are my object of worship and devotional service life after life; I only pray that I may have unconditional love and devotion at Your lotus feet."

Sundarim kavitam refers to dharma, religious principles found in the Vedas; dhanam means artha, or wealth; janam means wife, children, relatives etc., who are the objects of kama (socalled love, or lust). The Lord declares, "I am not merely abhorred by sense gratification derived through religiosity, wealth and lust, but I am appalled at the idea of transitory liberation from the cycle of birth and death. I do not want these four Vedic goals (dharma, artha, kama, moksha) to be the cause for My rendering service at Your lotus feet." A prayer by King Kulasekara has similarly expressed this mood of pure devotion.

Persons who strictly adhere to Vedic dharma worship Surya (the sun-god); those who desire wealth worship Ganesa; those craving carnal pleasures worship sakti (Kali, Durga); those who strive for liberation or mukti worship Siva; and those who worship Lord Visnu as the source of Vedas do so for material motives. All these grades of worshippers are contaminated by materialism and are never to be considered as pure devotees.

This type of Vedic worship is known as pancopasana or the worship of five demigods; whether it is performed with or without material desires hardly makes a difference, for such worship is in fact impersonal in any case. Lord Visnu can be worshipped purely and properly only by unmotivated devotional service.

Scriptural statements relevant to this sloka:

bhavatad bhakti ahaituki - "Causeless devotional service"

Srimad Bhagavatam 6.11.25:

"O my Lord, source of all opportunities, I do not desire enjoy in Dhruvaloka, the heavenly planets or the planet where Lord Brahma resides, nor do I want to be supreme ruler of all the earthly planets or the powers of mystic yoga, nor do I want liberation if I have to give up Your lotus feet."

Srimad Bhagavatam 11.2.42:

"Devotion, direct experience of the Supreme Lord, and detachment from other things - these three occur simultaneously for one who has taken shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in the same way as pleasure, nourishment and relief from hunger come simultaneously and increasingly, with each bite, for a person engaged in eating."

Srimad Bhagavatam 1.5.18:

"Persons who are actually intelligent and philosophically inclined should endeavor only for that purposeful end which is not obtainable even by wandering from the topmost planet (Brahmaloka) down to the lowest planet (Patala). As far as happiness derived from sense enjoyment is concerned it can be obtained automatically in course of time, just as in course of time we obtain miseries even though we do not desire them."

Sloka 5

ayi nanda-tanuja kinkaram

patitam mam visame bhavambudhau

krpaya tava pada-pankaja-

sthita-dhuli-sadrsam vicintaya

ayi - My Lord; nanda-tanuja - son of Nanda Maharaja, Krishna; kinkaram - the servant; mam - Me; visame - horrible; bhavambudhau - in the ocean of nescience; krpaya - by causeless mercy; tava - Your; pada-pankaja - lotus feet; sthita - situated at; dhuli-sadrsam - like a particle of dust; vicintaya - kindly consider.

"Oh, My Lord, O Krsna, son of Maharaja Nanda, I am Your eternal servant, but because of My own fruitive acts, I have fallen in this horrible ocean of nescience. Now please be causelessly merciful to Me. Consider Me a particle of dust at Your lotus feet."

Sri Sanmodana Bhasyam

Is it proper for a sadhaka who has taken shelter of the holy name to be excessively concerned about the material miseries afflicting him? To answer this question, Lord Caitanya composed this sloka, in which He illuminates the correct attitude of a devotee thusly:

"O Lord Krsna! Son of Maharaja Nanda! I am Your eternal servant; but now as a

result of my previous activities I have fallen into this terrible ocean of material existence. Lust, greed, anger and envy are my adversaries; they lurk in the waters like big fish to swallow me up. The rough waves of wasted hopes and anxiety are tossing me here and there, making my life miserable. Lashing gales of bad association add further suffering. In this condition I see You as my only shelter.

Karma, jnana, yoga are like seaweed

"Occasionally a small bunch of seaweed can be seen floating by; these are the weeds of karma, jnana, yoga, tapasya and so on. Has anyone ever crossed this ocean of nescience by grasping these paltry weeds? All I have ever seen is that some persons, while trying to swim across this ocean, have reached out to hold these weeds for support only to sink, seaweed and all, like dead weights. There is no other hope for safety other than Your unlimited mercy.

"The sturdy vessel of Your holy name is the only means to cross over this dangerous ocean of material existence. Knowing this too well, I have acted; I begged passage aboard the ship of the Lord's holy name from my spiritual master; by His causeless mercy, it was awarded. O Lord! You are known as the protector of Your devotees who are souls surrendered to Your lotus feet. Please accept this homeless destitute, cleanse me of all my faults and consider me a dust particle at Your lotus feet."

The message of this sloka is that those who have been accepted by the Lord on the path of bhakti should never return to the ways of sense enjoyment and liberation, despite material difficulties.

Caitanya Caritamrita, Antya 20.31,33,34:

"In great humility, considering Himself a conditioned soul of the material World,

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu again expressed his desire to be endowed with service to the Lord."

"I am your eternal servant, but I forgot Your Lordship. Now I have fallen in the ocean of nescience and have been conditioned by the external energy.

"Be causelessly merciful to Me by giving Me a place with the particles of dust at Your lotus feet so that I may engage in the service of Your Lordship as Your eternal servant."

Commentary

Lord Krsna, the son of Maharaja Nanda, is the object of everyone's devotion. Servitorship to Lord Krsna is inseparable from the identity or svarupa of the spirit soul.

Now that servant of Krsna has become apathetic to his service and is drowning in the terrible ocean of material existence, his only hope of survival is to get the Lord's mercy. If Lord Krsna out of His fathomless compassion accepts the jiva, placing him as a pollen particle at His lotus feet, then his hidden identity and eternal proclivity will be re-manifest. The word padadhuli (lotus-feet dust) used here further substantiates the jiva's original identity as the infinitesimal part and parcel of Krsna, as stated in the scriptures.

The jiva may intensely desire to acquire a place at Krsna's lotus feet, but the fact is that only when he becomes subservient to Krsna's will and cultivates devotional service is he accepted by the Lord.

This sloka indicates anartha-nivrtti

Until he is fully situated in his svarupa, a residue of anarthas cling to his heart;

thus his ultimate perfection and goal remains hidden by these slight impurities. Sambandha-jnana makes him eligible to chant the holy name purely and render loving devotional service by clearing these anarthas from his heart; this is called anartha-nivrtti.

At this stage of development, the devotee as known as jatarati (born of rati or love). The difference between `ajatarati sadhaka' (not born of rati) and jatarati devotee is all in the quality of chanting. One cannot be accepted as a jatarati devotee on the basis of pretense.

After anartha-nivrtti follows nairantarya, or undeviating steadiness in serving, then sveccha-purvika, voluntary meditation on Krsna's pastimes by which one develops spontaneous attraction for them; and then svarasiki, the spontaneous revelation of Krsna's pastimes even without one's expectation. Only after these three stages comes the final perfection of prema. Scriptural statements relevant to this sloka:

Srimad Bhagavatam 6.11.24:

"O my Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, will I again be able to be a servant of Your eternal servants who find shelter only at Your lotus feet? O Lord of my life, may I again become their servant so that my mind may always think of Your transcendental attributes, my words always glorify those attributes and my body always engage in the loving service of Your Lordship."

Srimad Bhagavatam 10.29.38:

"Therefore, O vanquisher of all distress, please show us mercy. To approach Your lotus feet we abandoned our families and homes, and we have no desire other than to serve You. Our hearts are burning with intense desires generated by Your beautiful smiling glances. O jewel among men, please make us Your maidservants."

Srila Rupa Goswami writes:

"If you have not worshipped the dust of the lotus feet of Srimati Radharani, or the land of Vraja that is marked with Her lotus feet, or did not serve the lotus feet of Her devotee who is grave because of meditating on Her, then how will you become attracted to that blackish ocean of nectar known as Syama or Krsna?"

In Bilap-kusum-anjali, sloka 8:

"O Radharani, beloved damsel of Vraja! I am exhausted from swimming in the tempestuous ocean of misery; I am but a derelict. Kindly pick me up on the infallible boat of Your causeless mercy. Guide me to the wonderful sanctuary of Your lotus feet."

In Radha-rasa-sudha-nidhi, sloka 259:

"Become totally absorbed in Krsna, whose crown is decorated with a peacock plume, and constantly sing His holy name and glories. Engross yourself in serving His lotus feet and continuously chant the maha-mantra to invoke His pleasure. My only and intimate heartfelt desire is to become a slave to Srimati Radharani's lotus feet. By Her causeless mercy I may attain spontaneous love for Her service."

Sloka 6

nayanam galad-asru-dharaya

vadanam gadgada-ruddhaya gira

pulakair nicitam vapuh kada

tava nama-grahane bhavisyati

nayanam - the eyes; galat-asru-dharaya - by streams of tears running down; vadanam - mouth; gadgada - faltering; russhaya - choked up; gira - with words; pulakaih - with erection of the hairs due to transcendental happiness; nicitam - covered; vapuh - the body; kada - when; tava - Your; nama-grahane - in chanting the name; bhavisyati - will be.

"My dear Lord, when will My eyes be beautified by filling with tears that constantly glide down as I chant Your holy name? When will My voice falter and all the hairs on My body stand erect in transcendental happiness as chant Your holy name?"

Sri Sanmodana Bhasyam

In the five previous slokas, the following topics have been explained: sraddha, sadhu-sangha, bhajana-kriya, anartha-nivritti, nistha, ruci, asakti and bhava.

From the progression of the subject matter so far, we are learning how the jiva, with the assistance of pure bhakti which is the essence of the Lord's hladini-sakti, gradually attains his svarupa.

In this verse, the theme of bhava-bhakti is being further elaborated upon. When the stage of bhava-bhakti is attained, pure devotional service is perfected to the point of becoming continuous and unbroken. Bhava is synonymous with the word rati (spontaneous attraction); bhava-bhakti is the bud that soon flowers into

the full bloom of prema-bhakti, loving devotion.

Out of the nine limbs of devotional services that are initiated in sadhana-bhakti, it is the chanting of Krsna's name alone that becomes very intensified in bhava-bhakti.

Symptoms of bhava

The sadhaka in bhava-bhakti is marked by nine symptoms:

1) he is anxious to utilize his time in Krsna's service and does not like to be idle;

2) he is always reserved and perseverant;

3) he is always detached from all material attraction;

4) he does not long for any material respect in return for his service;

5) he is certain of Lord Krsna's mercy;

6) he is always very eager to serve the Lord faithfully;

7) he is very attached to the chanting of the holy names of the Lord;

8) he is always eager to describe the transcendental qualities of the Lord;

9) he is very pleased to live in a place where the Lord's pastimes are performed, such as Mathura, Vrndavana or Dwaraka. These symptoms become visible in a devotee when he is on the threshold of entering into full bhava.

As previously indicated, when sadhana-bhakti is infused with ruci or the intense desire to attain the Lord's lotus feet, which softens and melts the heart, such sadhana-bhakti is then known as bhava-bhakti. That bhava consists of the rays of the sun of prema and the rays of the sun of Krsna's matchless transcendental beauty.

Therefore it is concluded that bhava-bhakti or rati is the dawning of prema.

Prema in its the very initial stage can be called bhava; and in this stage the eight ecstatic symptoms (asta-sattvika vikara) like crying, horripilating, etc. begin to slightly manifest. When meditating on the Lord's lotus feet, the heart melts and profuse tears stream out spontaneously. Descriptions of such ecstasies are found in the Vaisnava tantra-sastras and the Puranas, which confirm that the ecstatic symptoms that are manifest in prema with full intensity make a shy but firm appearance in the stage known as bhava.

The scriptures list many bodily symptoms of bhava under the heading anubhava, which include dancing, rolling in the dust, singing loudly, stretching the body, making loud outbursts, yawning, breathing heavily, ignoring outsiders, drooling, laughing like a madman, wheeling the head and belching.

As mentioned, there are eight major ecstatic symptoms called asta-sattvika vikara; these are paralysis, perspiration, horripilation, pallor, choked voice, trembling, weeping and swooning. Of these, dancing, singing, crying, horripilating, and choked voice are particularly prominent in the stage of bhava.

In this sloka, we find the supreme teacher Sri Krsna Caitanya has taken these symptoms into special account. He prays, "O Krsna! O Son of Maharaja Nanda! When will My eyes be decorated with tears of love when I chant Your Name? When will My voice choke up with ecstatic emotions? When will My body be filled with horripilations? O Lord! Be merciful that these ecstatic symptoms may soon decorate My body at the time of chanting Your Name!"

Sri Caitanya Caritamrita Antya 20.37:

"Without love of Godhead, My life is useless. Therefore I pray that You accept Me as Your servant and give Me the salary of ecstatic love of God."

Commentary

"O Lord Krsna, enjoyer of the gopis, when will the eyes of this gopi brim over with cascading tears at the recitation of Your Name? When will my voice choke up with love and my body tingle with horripilation?"

This is a perfect example of a prayer of love for Krsna. In the context of this verse another verse from Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu may be cited for consideration: "O Lord Pundarikaksa, while chanting Your holy name with tears in my eyes, when shall I dance in ecstasy on the bank of Yamuna?" (BRS 1.2.156)

In chanting the secondary names of Krsna (gauna-nama), there is no question of experiencing prema. Therefore Lord Caitanya has said, "Although the teachings of the Upanisads may be heard, they are far removed from the nectarean pastimes of Krsna, and therefore they are unable to melt the heart and make the hearer erupt into ecstatic tears and horripilation." The subject of the Upanisads is Brahman; but that is only remotely connected with the sweetness of the narration of Krsna's pastimes, which always produces ecstasy in the hearts of pure devotees.

This sloka does not refer to those who have naturally moist eyes or who display artificial bhava; when the jiva becomes pure and spontaneously attracted to devotional service to Krsna, his body and very life force become completely obedient to the eternal bhavas that constantly play within the heart. Therefore, the melting of the heart, the ecstatic symptoms that grip the body and life force are experienced only to those unalloyed devotees who are absolutely cleansed of all anarthas.

Those neophyte souls who try to artificially imitate the ecstatic emotions and symptoms of the mahabhagavata devotees so as to deceive the general populace are in fact creating a gigantic hurdle on their path of advancement in Krsna consciousness.

Scriptural statements relevant to this sloka:

Srimad Bhagavatam 11.3.30-31:

"One should learn how to associate with the devotees of the Lord by gathering with them to chant the glories of the Lord. This process is most purifying. As devotees thus develop their loving friendship, they feel mutual happiness and satisfaction. And by thus encouraging one another they are able to give up material sense gratification, which is the cause of all suffering.

The devotees of the Lord constantly discuss the glories of the Personality of Godhead among themselves. Thus they constantly remember the Lord and remind one another of His qualities and pastimes. In this way, by their devotion to the principles of bhakti-yoga, the devotees please the Personality of Godhead, who takes away from them everything inauspicious. Being purified of all impediments. the devotees awaken to pure love of Godhead, and thus, even within this world, their spiritualized bodies exhibit symptoms of transcendental ecstasy, such as standing of the bodily hairs on end."

Srimad Bhagavatam 11.3.32:

"Having achieved love of Godhead, the devotees sometimes cry out loud, absorbed in thought of the infallible Lord. Sometimes they laugh, feel great pleasure, speak out loud to the Lord, dance or sing. Such devotees, having transcended material conditional life, sometimes imitate the unborn Supreme by acting out His pastimes. And sometimes, achieving His personal audience, they remain peaceful and silent."

Sloka 7

yugayitam nimesena

caksusa pravrsayitam

sunyayitam jagat sarvam

govinda virahena me

yugayitam - appearing like a great millennium; nimesena - by a moment; caksusa - from the eyes; pravrsayitam - tears falling like torrents of rain; sunyayitam - appearing void; jagat – the world; sarvam - all; govinda - from Lord Govinda, Krishna; virahena me - by My separation.

"My Lord Govinda, because of separation from You, I consider even a moment a great millennium. Tears flow from My eyes like torrents of rain, and I see the entire world as void."

Sri Sanmodana Bhasyam

When bhava or rati-bhakti reaches the stage of sthayi-bhava (constancy), it mixes with four other bhavas - vibhava, anubhava, sattvika and vyabhicari - and transforms into bhakti-rasa or the spiritual mellow of devotional service. Then the ecstatic symptoms of anubhava and sattvika-vikara are fully expressed.

Srila Rupa Goswami, describing prema, writes in the Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu, "That bhava-bhakti which from the start so excessively affects the heart that it melts into a sublime salve of love, which brings within easy reach the highest sentiments of divine bliss, which generates an intense desire for Krsna, is known by the perfected devotees as prema." From this statement it is obvious that an extreme attraction, affection and spontaneous dedication to Lord Krsna is synonymous with prema.

The relationship between the visaya (the object of worship, or Krsna) and the asraya (the devotee) is exchanged through the five principal rasas of neutrality, servitorship, friendship, parenthood and conjugal love. Sometimes the main rasas in the relationship subside, allowing the seven secondary rasas of laughter,

wonderment, pity, bravado, anger, fear and horror to be relished.

The excellences of prema

Among the principal rasas, conjugal or madhurya-rasa is the most exalted. As madhurya-rasa increases in intensity, it manifests all the excellences of prema, which are pranaya (love that avoids respect), sneha (melting of the heart), mana (hiding of love by crooked means), raga (attachment), anuraga (further attachment), bhava (ecstacy) and maha-bhava (great ecstacy), one after another.

In santa-rasa (neutrality), there is a kind of affection for the Lord marked by great exultation. Such affection is displayed as an attachment for Brahman coupled with an attitude of disregard and unconcern for everything else, including other rasas. When this affection (known as mamata) increases, the attraction deepens to the point of dasya-rasa or servitorship. In this rasa, the intensified affection remains permanent even if the relationship is seriously tested.

When the affection for the Supreme Lord is fortified with unflinching faith and trust it is called pranaya, the very essence of sakhya-rasa or friendship. But in the presence of awe and reverential worship pranaya will not appear.

As affection increases, pranaya develops into a mischievous and crooked mood of unusual flavor known as mana. In this mood, the loving resentment of the devotee forces even the Supreme Lord to compromise, out of His desire to relish this emotional exchange.

That abundance of love that melts the heart to emotional liquid is known as sneha. Sneha is symptomatized by profuse unchecked tears; and in this stage the devotee's yearning to see Krsna never admits satiety. In vatsalya-rasa or parental love this yearning is felt as the devotee's constant anxiety for Krsna's well-being.

Sneha infected by intense craving is called raga. In the stage of raga a moment's separation from the beloved is unbearable; while in union the opposite is true - even extreme grief feels like exhilaration. In raga, the object of worship (Krsna)

is made to appreciate His own ever-youthful form by the attentions of the devotee; thus raga itself becomes ever-new and ageless and is transformed into anuraga.

In anuraga the lover and beloved enrapture one another into obedience. There is even a longing to be born as animals or other lower species that enjoy a direct connection with Krsna; this is called prema-vaicitra, the variations of love. In the anuraga stage, separation from Krsna blesses the devotee with excessive ecstasies.

When anuraga is overflooded by the magnificent ocean of ecstatic love and the devotee completely loses himself in transcendental madness, maha-bhava is attained. In this stage, even the dropping of an eyelid that blocks the devotee's view of the Lord for less than a second is intolerable. In the ecstacy of separation, a mere moment is stretched to timeless eternity.

In maha-bhava, in both union and separation, all the symptoms of sattvika and sancari bhavas manifest to the fullest degree. Lord Caitanya pours an ocean of meaning from the pitcher of this sloka - for a full elaboration on the different gradations of loving ecstacy that are hinted at here, one should consult Srila Jiva Goswami's Priti-sandarbha.

The word yugayitam is a simple and direct expression of timelessness; the phrase govinda virahena conveys deep feelings of separation (vipralambha). Fully Krsna conscious rasika devotee have subdivided vipralambha into purva raga (preliminary attraction), mana (seeming anger) and pravasa (separation by distance). In this sloka, Caitanya Mahaprabhu reveals that the sadhaka dwelling within this world need only relish the purva raga stage of vipralambha ecstacy.

The scriptures declare that the mood of separation engenders ten conditions in the sadhaka's person. They are: pondering, sleeplessness, perturbation, emaciation, pallor, incoherent speech, a stricken condition, madness, delusion and death (unconscious).

Sri Caitanya Caritamrita, Antya 20.40-41:

"In My agitation a day never ends, for every moment seems like a millennium. Pouring incessant tears, My eyes are like clouds in the rainy season.

"The three words have become void because of separation from Govinda. I feel as if I were burning alive in a slow fire."

Commentary

"O Govinda, the entire world is but a void in Your absence; My eyes are raining tears like monsoon clouds, and each batting of My eyelids seems like a millennium."

This is an excellent expression of vipralambha-rasa

This sloka was composed to teach the jata-rati devotee that it is absolutely essential he take up the vipralambha-rasa not caring for sambhoga or enjoyment. In material life, viraha or separation causes only grief. But on the transcendental plane, viraha produces extreme ecstacy within, though externally the inner ecstacy is reflected as acute anguish.

Vipralambha therefore nourishes sambhoga or enjoyment within. In fact, sambhoga is an external feature of the vipralambha-rasa in the state known as prema vaicitra or loving varigatedness. The devotee incessantly and intensely recollects Krsna and His pastimes in vipralambha-rasa, to the point of never forgetting Krsna. This is indeed the super-excellent stage of bhajana.

The error of the Gauranga-nagari sect

The sambhoga exhibited by the pretentious group known as gauranga-najari, who do not sincerely practice Krsna consciousness but claim to be devotees, is simply a result of their insincerity. That sambhoga is a severe impediment on the pure devotional path. It is factually only self-pleasure; hence it is bereft of sincere devotion to Krsna.

Just by knowing the meaning of the sloka, "The desire to gratify one's own senses is kama (lust), but the desire to please the senses of Lord Krsna is prema (love)" (Caitanya Caritamrita, Adi 4.165), one is spared from the urge to sense enjoyment. Unfortunately, unscrupulous pseudo-devotees try to disguise their lusty urges by presenting Lord Caitanya to the world as a pleasure seeker (nagari). But the true meaning of Lord Caitanya's pastimes is that Lord Krsna descended as Lord Caitanya to accept the sentiments of an asraya-tattva devotee who is constantly absorbed in the vipralambha mood.

As mentioned, vipralambha nourishes enjoyment, but it is Krsna's enjoyment that is being nourished by the pure devotee in this mood. Caitanya Mahaprabhu is eternally the embodiment of vipralambha-rasa, and He personally propagates this means of nourishing Krsna's pleasure among the jivas, who must discard their futile attempts for sambhoga-rasa.

Scriptural statements relevant to this sloka:

Sri Krishna Karanamrita, sloka 41:

"O supreme shelter of the destitute, O Lord Hari, You are an ocean of mercy! Alas! Oh alas! Without seeing Your lovely face how am I going to live through these wretched days and nights?"

Srila Madhavendra Puri's words as recorded in Padyavali, text 400:

"O compassionate Lord of the helpless! O Lord of Mathura! When will I be able to see You? Your absence has made my stricken heart extremely anxious. O my beloved! What am I to do now?"

In Ujjvala-nilamali, text 64:

"Srimati Radharani is completely smitten. She is experiencing the limitless ocean of suffering as the ten conditions of separation overcome Her. She ponderings without sleeping and suffers perturbations, she has become emaciated and pallid, she speaks incoherently, is stricken, mad and deluded and swoons almost to death."

Sloka 8

aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam

adarsanan marma-hatam karotu va

yatha tatha va vidadhatu lampato

mat-prana-nathas tu sa eva naparah

aslisya - embracing with great pleasure; va - or; pada-ratam - who is fallen at the lotus feet; pinastu - let Him trample; mam - Me; adarsanat - by not being visible; marma-hatam - brokenhearted; karotu - let Him make; va - or; yatha - as (He likes); tatha - so; va - or; vidadhatu - let Him do; lampatah - a debauchee, who

mixes with other women; mat-prana-nathah – the Lord of My life; tu - but; sah - He; eva - only; na aparah - not anyone else.

"Let Krishna tightly embrace this servant, who has fallen at His lotus feet. Let Him trample Me or break My heart by not being visible to Me. He is a debauchee, after all, and can do whatever He likes, but He is still no more other than the worshipable Lord of My heart."

Sri Sanmodana Bhasyam

The consciousness of the devotee who reaches the sublime platform of prema is described in this sloka. "That supreme adulterer and libertine, Krsna, may grant endless bliss to this servant surrendered to His lotus feet; or he may drive me into excruciating depths of despair by not being present before me; He may please to do anything He wants with me ─ even to the extent of enjoying with another of His beloved gopis in my presence; yet He remains always the Lord of my heart; for me there can never be any other person."

We find accounts of the incomparable position of such fully surrendered souls in Srimad Bhagavatam: "When the mortal living beings finally decide to relinquish all fruitive activities and totally surrender to Me, I reciprocate by giving them the nectar of immortality, elevating them to become My eternal associates." The conclusion is that in Krsna-prema, Krsna becomes the life, soul and the greatest treasure of the devotee. In this mature stage of devotional service the sublime exchanges of mutual attraction between the devotee and the Lord flower intofull bloom. (Prema-dharma)

Sri Prahlada Maharaja says in the Srimad Bhagavatam: "Just as pieces of iron rush of their own volition, attracted by a magnet, similarly by the independent will of the Supreme Lord my heart and mind have shaken off attachment for material life; now I am being forcibly drawn as if by a magnet to His lotus feet."

This statement demonstrates the truth of the eternal bond between the infinitesimal jiva and infinite Supreme Lord. This relationship becomes obscured when the jiva gives up Krsna consciousness. But when, by good fortune, the

living entity's consciousness becomes purified, then the mutual attraction between the Lord and His part and parcel is revived. A piece of iron, when clean and shining, is automatically attracted to a magnet; similarly, the consciousness of the spirit soul, when purified, clean and shining, will automatically exhibit attraction to Krsna. Besides facilitating this attraction, self-purification has no function.

The path of Krsna consciousness is called prema-dharma, the dharma of loving devotional service; sadhakas of the prema-dharma must know that save and except for prema, this path of religion neglects all results desired by those who pursue dharma, artha, kama and moksa. The devotee sacrifices everything for Krsna Lord Krsna Himself substantiates this truth in the Srimad Bhagavatam: "My dear gopis! Severing all family attachments for My sake, you have achieved what is very rare even for the great philosophers and yogis. Our meetings with each other are completely pure and unblemished. If I tried to repay My debt to you for your love, devotion, service and renunciation, even if I endeavored with My immortal body throughout all eternity I would be unable to do it. I am obliged to you life after life. Though you may consider Me absolved of any debt out of your natural meekness and loving demeanor, I will nonetheless always remain beholden to you."

As indicated by the Lord's declaration of indebtedness to the gopis, to please and attract Krsna, one should love and satisfy the devotees whom He holds most dear. In other words, one who desires entrance into Krsna consciousness must have no interest in selfish so-called pleasures. A devotee serves Krsna, has affection for Him, meets Him, or may do anything - the sole intention is to please Krsna and increasing one's loving service to Him. Lord Caitanya uses the phrase `deeply afflicted in the heart' in this sloka; in reality, the devotee does not feel grief but exultation. To confirm this fact, Lord Krsna tells the gopis: "For My sake you disregarded social taboos, Vedic injunctions, and even cut off connection to your relatives and family members. In all this, your meditation on Me was single-minded.

You did not even care for your beauty and nuptial happiness. So in order to increase your love for Me I disappeared from your sight. Please do not blame Me for this act of love, because you are extremely dear to Me, as I am to you. "Another important point in this sloka is that although the Lord speaks of `giving Me bliss by Your loving embrace', there is no trace of self-satisfaction; even here the only thought is of loving Krsna by giving oneself to Him for His pleasure.

Lord Caitanya's statements very much exemplify the true emotions of pure love.

The significance of Sri Sri Siksastaka

The eight slokas of the Siksastaka are pre-eminently significant. Lord Krsna desired to know, "How glorious is Srimati Radharani's love for Me, She being My internal spiritual potency? How does She alone fully relish My transcendental qualities? What is the happiness She feels when She realizes the sweetness of My love for Her?" Longing to answer these three questions, the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna revealed His eternal form as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Who personifies audarya or magnanimity in absolute fullness. Sri Caitanya savours to their mysterious depths the three states of Radharani's love as He performs manifold pastimes in an exclusive region of Goloka known as Sri Navadvipa-dhama. Adorned with the ecstatic sentiments and lustrous complexion of Srimati Radharani, Krsna as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu appears on this earth once in a day of Brahma. His most recent descent to the mortal plane occurred in the year 1486 of the Christian era in the West Bengal district of Nadia, where the divine waters of Mother Ganga purify the town of Navadvipa. Navadwipa-dhama is non-different from Vrindavana. He took His birth during a full lunar eclipse on the bright moon night of the month of Phalguna (March). The whole town of Navadwipa was reverberating with the chanting of God's name, as this was the custom during a lunar eclipse. The Lord accepted Pandit Jaganatha Misra and Srimati Sacidevi as His father and mother. His childhood was filled with childlike restlessness and miraculous pranks; His boyhood days were spent in studies; His marriage in youth was strictly in accordance with Vedic culture as was His execution of household life. Thereafter He went to Gaya and accepted spiritual initiation in the ten syllable Gopal mantra from Sripad Isvara Puri, a great acarya in the Brahma Madhva disciplic succession; thus He taught the living entities their duty to take shelter of a self-realized spiritual master as directed in the scriptures. After His return from Gaya He performed congregational chanting of the holy name with His associates and devotees, flooding Bengal with the nectar of the holy name of God and propagating devotional service to Krsna. At age twenty-four He received sannyasa initiation from Sripad Kesava Bharati of the Sankara sampradaya and forever severed all links with home and family life. The next six years found

Him on pilgrimage through Bengal, Orissa, South India, Maharastra, Uttar Pradesh (Mathura, Vrindavana, Prayag, Kasi), and Bihar (Kaukai, Natsala, Rajmahal). In His travels He blessed millions of conditioned souls by giving them the holy name of Krsna and teaching them the science of pure devotion. He refuted all philosophical speculations contradictory to the conclusions of the authorized scriptures and firmly established the philosophy of acintya bheda-abheda tattva, which He Himself taught for the first time as the essence of the teachings of the other four schools of Vaisnava philosophy. For the next eighteen years He made His residence at Sri Jaganatha Puri. There, in the company of His intimate associates, He relished the nectar of love of Godhead, exploring fully the three questions. From amongst His followers, He sent out powerful preachers to lead the conditioned souls along the path of pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord. In this way He drowned entire India in the waves of Krsna-prema. He requested many intimate associates like Sri Svarupa Damodara, Sri Ramananda Raya, Sri Prabhodananda Saraswati, Sri Rupa Goswami, Sri Sanatana Goswami, Sri Raghunatha dasa Goswami, Sri Gopal Bhatta Goswami, Sri Jiva Goswami, Sri Kavi Karnapura and others to write books establishing His teachings; for this purpose He impregnated their hearts with His divine potency. He has personally condensed these selfsame teachings into His eight Sikshastaka prayers; they reach out and touch all levels of devotees. At times the Lord would immerse Himself in the nectar of these eight slokas, tasting their conclusions in the association of Srila Svarupa Damodara and Sri Ramananda Raya. Later, these slokas were explained in great detail in important scriptures like Sri Caitanya Caritamrita. By His own example, Lord Caitanya taught how to lead an ideal householder life and the life of strict renunciation, sannyasa. These teachings too are all contained in this eight verses. They are superexellent. Surrendered souls who read with devotion these nectarean prayers from the mouth of the Supreme Lord Gauranga will certainly be attracted to the honey of Lord Caitanya's lotus feet. Like spiritually intoxicated bees, they will swarm to the lily-filled lake of Krsna's love. Four hundred and one years after the advent of Lord Gauranga, the commentary known as Sri Sanmodana Bhasyam was composed by Kedarnatha Bhaktivinoda. The Siksastaka prayers particularly distill the essence of all Vedic scriptures for the taste of the rasika-bhakta, the pure devotee. Having emanated from the lips of the Supreme Lord Himself, these prayers are the Absolute Truth. They should be read, recited and worshipped daily by sincere and fortunate souls. These prayers should be as constant companions, learnt and taken to heart. Caitanya Caritamrita, Antya 20.48-52: "I am a maidservant at the lotus feet of Krsna. He is the embodiment of transcendental happiness and mellows. If He likes He can tightly embrace Me

and make Me feel oneness with Him, or by not giving Me His audience He may corrode My mind and body. Nevertheless, it is He who is the Lord Of My life. "My dear friend, just hear the decision of My mind. Krsna is the Lord of My life in all conditions, whether He shows Me affection or kills Me by giving Me unhappiness. "Sometimes Krsna gives up the company of other gopis and becomes controlled, mind and body, by Me. Thus He manifests My good fortune and gives others distress by performing His loving affairs with Me." "Or, since after all He is a very cunning, obstinate debauchee with a propensity to cheat, He takes to the company of other women. He then indulges in loving affairs with them in front of Me to give distress to My mind. Nevertheless, He is still the Lord of My life. "I do not mind My personal distress. I only wish for the happiness of Krsna, for His happiness is the goal of My life. However, if he feels great happiness in giving Me distress, that distress is the best of My happiness."

Commentary

"I am simply a lowly maid-servant of the gopis who are always absorbed in serving Krsna's lotus feet. He may embrace me, He may exploit me, or He may break my heart by not appearing before me. He is a libertine accustomed to have His way with the gopi damsels for the satisfaction of His lusty desires. Let His will prevail; in spite of everything He is the beloved Lord of my heart, nothing less, nothing more. Lord Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, fully independent. My religion is to obey His command. I have lost my independent whimsy; I could never recoil from serving His will for any reason. "In the perfect stage, the devotee has shed forever his material designations of body and mind. His only concern is to satisfy Lord Krsna's every desire in the transcendental realm of Goloka, which is Krsna's personal playground. In this mood of unalloyed love, the devotee's only hope for service is in the role of a female assistant to the gopis; such service is indeed available in the devotee's original spiritual form of transcedental senses. The jiva must never consider assuming the position of an asraya-vigraha devotee (i.e. a principle associate of Krsna).Just the thought of this will make him egoistic. The uncontaminated state of the pure jiva's existence in the spiritual world is subservience to the asraya-vigraha. The jiva is dear to Lord Krsna; yet constitutionally, by the Lord's desire, he is in the marginal category of the Lord's spiritual energy.

The principles revealed in Sri Sri Siksastaka

The eight Siksastaka verses demonstrate the three principles sambandha, abhidheya, and prayojana. Broadly, the first verse teaches about the process of the congregational chanting of the holy name; the second about the unfortunate reluctance of the conditioned soul to take up this best process; the third about the proper means of chanting the holy name; the fourth about the renunciation of deception and all adverse desires; the fifth about the jiva's original spiritual identity; the sixth about feeling the good fortune of coming nearer to the Lord; the seventh about the highly elevated mood of separation; and the eighth about how one gets established in his absolute goal of necessity. In all eight verses, the abhideya principle is shown. Within that context, the first five verses impart sambandha-jnana; the remaining three explain prayojana. The first five verses concern sadhana-bhakti, and the next two about bhava-bhakti. The sixth to the eighth verse, and especially the seventh and eighth, deal with prema-bhakti, but for sadhakas. Selecting the following verse composed by Srila Visvanatha Cakravati Thakur to convey my feelings, I offer my obeisances to all the readers and thus end this commentary. "The Supreme Lord Krsna, the son of Maharaja Nanda, and His transcendental abode are of the same spiritual substance. They are my objects of worship. The topmost service is rendered by the gopis of Vraja. Srimad Bhagavatam is the absolutely authentic scripture, the basis of all teachings and conclusions. Krsnaprema is the fifth goal, beyond the four goals of the Vedas; it is also the supreme destination. All this is Lord Caitanya's opinion, and therefore the opinion most favored by us; other opinions are neither favored by or even interesting to us."

Scriptural statements relevant to this sloka:

Srimad Bhagavatam 10.31.11:

"Dear Master, O Beloved, when You leave cowherd village to

herd the cows, our minds are disturbed by the thought of Your feet, more beautiful than a lotus, being pricked by the spiked

husks of grain and the rough grass and plants."

Srimad Bhagavatam 10.31.15:

"When You go to the forest during the day, a tiny fraction of a second becomes like a millennium for us because we cannot see You. And even when we can eagerly look upon Your beautiful face, so beautifully adorned by curly locks, our pleasure is hindered by our eyelids, which were fashioned by the foolish creator."

Sri Krsna Karnamrita, sloka 12: "May the lotus-like feet of the Supreme Lord Krsna, the only gallant hero who plays eternal pastimes with all the Lakshmi-devis (gopis); whose blooming beauty withers the exquisite beauty of lotuses; and who is an expert at fully convincing His devotees of His divine protection, be forever enthroned in my heart, giving me unfathomable happiness."